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HENRY WARD BEECHER.



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LAW AND LIBERTY.

"For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law."—Gal. v., 13-18.

Of all the writers whose words are recorded in the Bible, there was no one whose spirit so perfectly accorded, on the whole, with the modern spirit, and the spirit which prevails in America, as Paul's. There was no one who had such a profound sense of individualism, of the right of the individual, or of the object of religion—namely, to build up in each particular person a manhood that should be large, strong, rich, and perfectly free. There was no one of them that spoke so much about liberty—a sound peculiarly pleasant to our ears—as the Apostle Paul; and he declares that we are called to it; that it is the very thing in religion to which we are called. Now, there is an apprehension, very wide-spread—and we can see how reasonably it has sprung up—that religion, so far from making men free, hampers them, restricts them, ties them up, burdens them; and there is among men a universal impression, when life is strong in young veins, and the impulse to do just as they wish to is power-

ful, that they do not want to be religious. The fact is that they want to enjoy themselves a little while.

They have a superabundance of hilarity, and a strong impulse toward enjoyment; and they think it will be time to be still and careful when the world is not so stimulating; they say, "When we are old enough to have the rheumatism, why, then we won't race and dance; when we don't want to laugh, why, then we'll be sober; and when we can't do anything else, then we'll get ready to die; but as long as we have vigor and vitality and sunlight and all sorts of pleasures, why, we're going to have a good time. We'll take the bad time when we can't help it." On the other hand, there are many persons—persons that are anxious about their children, and trying to bring them up well; people that take on the duty of instructing the community, and feel themselves responsible for what their fellow-men believe and what they do; folks that are trying to form and employ public sentiment—there are many such persons who are astonished when we say that religion is the freest of all things, that men who have once become converted and are truly Christians are no longer under the law, and that a typical Christian, one who is a type of what religion really should be, is a person that does just what he has a mind to. "A person that does what he has a mind to, a Christian?" say they: "why, it is contrary to the whole face of Scripture, which says that you must deny yourself; that you must take up your cross; that there must be a yoke and a burden. To preach that when a man becomes a true Christian he may do just what he has a mind to is flagitious, and will lead to licentiousness and all manner of self-indulgence." Historical developments are pointed to by men, of what are called "Antinomians," whom Christians have regarded as claiming to be raised to such a state that there was no more law for them, so that whenever they wanted to do a thing their doing it made the act right in their own estimation—the grace of God being given them to make them worse rather than better. Conservators of purity and religion are very much afraid of this doctrine of liberty, because they think it will break the bands of responsibility, and destroy the power of conscience upon men.

Now, Paul insists upon it that we are born to liberty, that we are called to liberty, and that the true typical Christian experience is one that takes away the power of the law over us, and gives us freedom to do what we want to do. Other inspired writers, and James among them, enjoin upon us the law of liberty, and exhort us to continue faithful therein, declaring that they are not unfruitful who do this. James says :

“Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.”

Men who are under the divine inspiration exhort us to liberty. How could this be if it were as flagitious in its results as men claim that it is? Let us look into this matter a little.

What is liberty? In the first place, the way in which men have learned to consider liberty has come from their experience in being oppressed by each other, and in emancipating themselves from the domination of a neighbor or a ruler. Breaking away from him has seemed to them to be liberty. In other words, the notion of being at liberty to do what you want to is intimately associated with the act of throwing off law and throwing off government. Men do not discriminate between the process by which one comes to a state of liberty and the essential element of that state.

In regard to civil liberty, we are very proud of having had the war of Independence. We broke away from Great Britain, and became masters of ourselves, and made our own laws, and elected our own officers; and as a nation we could do what we pleased without asking anybody's consent; and from these various historical developments of the power of liberty, men have come to hold the idea that liberty means ignoring authority and setting aside controlling laws.

Now, by your leave, I will say that no man is free until he is absolutely in bondage. No man is free until he is so in bondage that he does not know that he is in bondage. No man has true liberty until he has been so subdued that he accepts the control that is over him, and makes it his own, and ceases to be able to discriminate between his individual

will and the law which is exterior to him. I think there will be no doubt about this matter if you will trace it step by step, and see how men are developed.

Consider, first, how men become, in their material and physical relations, large, strong, facile, and successful. When the child is born, and begins to learn the qualities of matter and the use of itself—of its feet, of its hands, of its eyes, and of its ears—what is the process by which we undertake to develop him out of weakness into strength? We teach him the knowledge of matter; we teach him what are the laws, as we say, of matter; and we teach him strictly to observe those laws. At first the child does not know the difference between cutting edges and blunt edges; but he learns it; and he learns how to accommodate himself to those qualities or natures. He does not know the difference between fire and ice, nor does he know the difference between water to be plunged into and the air to be breathed. He learns the peculiarities of these substances and their laws. No child has learned to go alone, to use his hands, and to have the comfort of his eye, of his ear, or of his mouth, until he has learned what are the laws to which these various organs must conform themselves; and learning on the part of the child is obeying; and obeying is coming to more of himself. Having his way by refusing law would be never to walk, never to use his hands, never to look, never to hear, never to taste, never to do anything except to have his own way, which would be to be an everlasting cipher or zero. Every step by which every child comes to be less and less a child and more and more of a man, every step by which he finds out more laws, on every side of him, in the air above, on the earth beneath, among men, in the infinite variety of the affairs of human life, is a step of obedience to law. He learns what laws are, and how to yield to them, and how to apply them; and he grows by compliance with them and obedience to them.

Follow it up a little. We educate ourselves either for pleasure or for accomplishment. How is it that one learns to become a pianist? By sitting down, and saying, "I am going to have my own way about this matter"—or, by

finding out exactly what is required by the law of sound and by the law of instrumentation, and saying to the hand, "You have got to come to it: you don't like it, but you must come to it"; and twisting and turning, and twisting and turning it, and training and drilling, training and drilling it, through months and years? It will take a long time to subdue that hand to the nature of the instrument. It is going to control the instrument by-and-by; but it will control the instrument by-and-by because it has been a bond-slave to it. He who, having accepted the bondage of the instrument, drills his hand till it has become perfectly obedient to it, transfers to his hand all the virtue of that instrument.

The man who undertakes to play billiards must submit to law, and be led by it, until he has learned how to handle the cue, and how to strike the balls and make them rebound and affect each other. He cannot say, "I will do as I please here," until he is able to do just what the billiard table requires. When he has submitted himself to the nature of the game, and mastered its requirements, then he can say, "I will do as I have a mind to," because he is inclined to do what the laws of billiard playing demand.

So it is in regard to every single act of this sort—riding, fencing, dancing, rolling ten-pins, plowing, or cutting wood. In each of these instances the first step is the subjugation of yourself by obedience to the law; and the second, when you have obeyed it perfectly, is unconscious, automatic action. When you have reached this point you have perfect liberty—the power to go or to stop; to do or not to do; to accomplish in one way or in another. A man becomes large, facile, ingenious, accomplishing, in the proportion in which he has subjugated, by apprenticeship, every muscle, every nerve, every power, every element of his being, to the laws under which it acts. This denying of himself, this taking up his cross, in regard to all the specialties of life; this dying to himself and living in the laws that are around about him, gives him back to himself strong, wise, facile; and he becomes free in the proportion in which he has submitted himself to perfect training and drill.

That which is true in respect to the body is as true in respect to the social conditions of life. A man says, "I am born free and equal with all the world"; and in one sense all men are born free and equal. Men are said to be equal in our political bible; and politically men have equal rights—that is, they alike have the right to obey the laws, and to reap the fruits of obedience; and they have an equal right if they disobey the laws to be punished for it. The highest has an equal right to be punished with the lowest. In the eyes of the Government men are equal as citizens; they are equal before the law; but they are equal in no other sense. They are not equal in noses, nor in eyes, nor in ears, nor in any sense other than simply that of their fundamental political rights, which are, comparatively speaking, artificial and remote.

A man says, "I am born free, and am as good as anybody." It depends entirely upon who that *anybody* is. He says, "I do not believe in the laws of society, and I am going to do as I please." In that coarse sense he goes out into the community, and every single person is his enemy. A rude, vulgar man who goes into civilized society will find that all those among whom he moves are of necessity his antagonists; and he will be expelled from that society. A man who would move and thrive in the midst of refined and cultivated people must become acquainted with social laws, and must comply with them. When he begins to comply with them it is awkward for him. It is awkward for a man to come into a room gracefully when he has not learned the postures of polite society. He does not know what to do with his arms, nor how to stand or sit. What is an awkward man but a man who has not learned the laws of civility in the social relations of men to each other? There are such laws, although they are not written in a book. They are not penal laws, but they are laws which are just as real as though there was a penalty attached to them. The laws which govern one man in his intercourse with another in life are as real as those laws which govern the stellar universe. Every man who becomes facile and easy and natural in his relations to society becomes so because he has learned and complied

with the conditions which are imposed upon him by society laws. It is by obedience that he comes to be free to do what he pleases. He is free to do what he pleases simply because he has learned how to please to do the things that are right, but on no other conditions.

That which is true in respect to social relations is as true in respect to civil relations. Who is the free man in society? Is it the counterfeiter, who watches with suspicion every man that knows him, and who is conscious that the whole armed force of society has been put, by his act, in battle array against him? The murderer, the thief, the gambler, has set at defiance the laws of society; and is he free? The man who is hunted, who is circumscribed, who is always in danger, and who has to create a circle for himself in order to exist at all, because society is his natural adversary—is he free? No. The man who is the most intelligent, and has the most perfect knowledge of the laws of the community, and believes them to be right, and so thoroughly obeys them that he does not know that he obeys them; the man who obeys laws and does not know it except when he begins—he is free.

When I am driving it does not occur to me that I am obeying any law. I turn to the right on the turnpike to avoid a stage that is likely to be run into by me, not because I think of the law that requires me to do so. I do it unconsciously. I do not go through the process of thinking, "I will turn out because I am required to by law." And after I have done it I do not think of it. When I bow to a man, I do it without thinking of it, and I do not treasure up the fact, and tell my wife about it when I go home. Having done it, I do not know that I did it. I speak kindly to a child, and give it sympathy, not because there is any law that says I must, (although there is such a law), but because when the law first said so to me I obeyed it so implicitly that I have forgotten it now. I perform the deed, not because public sentiment or law says, "Do it," but because I have been so drilled into it that I do it without law. The law says, "Thou shalt not steal;" but that is not why I refrain from stealing. The law does not permit me to do it; but if it did

I would n't. And now I do of myself that which the law once obliged me to do because I was so low and base and undeveloped that I needed something to show me what the best things were. I followed the law, I obeyed it, and finally I came to see, by my higher intelligence, what it was to be a true man; and this is the way to come to power and freedom.

That which is true in regard to social relations and civil matters is true in respect to political affairs. A man may be free under a despotism. That is to say, let the Czar of Russia issue his decrees so that every man knows just what he wants him to do, and let his subjects obey because they really believe theirs is the best government, and under it they become free. If they were always resisting it they would always be hedged in, hindered, restricted, bound; but by accepting it, though it be an imperfect administration, they become free in proportion as they conform to it, or in proportion as they run with those who are in sovereign power over them. In every government the man who accepts the law is the freest. The man who knows how to conform to the laws of commerce is freer than the man who does not know how to conform to them—for there are laws of commerce as much as there are laws of taste, laws of good manners, or any other laws that apply to the individual.

When a man first goes into business, he does not understand the laws which govern it, and we do not trust him with much liberty or scope. Why? Because he has not been trained to obedience to the inevitable and compulsory laws of commerce. When he has learned them, and is expert in them, and yields to them, and obeys them, we say of him, "He can go alone now." He has tied himself to those laws, and he has gone with them until they are incorporated into him and he into them; and he is free so far as he follows them; but if he resists them they restrict his liberty, and punish him.

So, liberty does not mean throwing off law: it means taking it on. Liberty does not mean opposing government: it means the most absolute submission to government, provided it is a right government, conformable to our bodily

structure, our social make-up, our intellectual qualities, and our moral nature. He is freest who submits to the most laws, and submits to them the most implicitly. No man gets possession of himself until he has gone through this process. The trouble and curse of daily life in every direction is the want of that unconscious or automatic action which is the result of training in laws and principles and obedience to them. Great mischief has come from men's imperfect knowledge of laws, and the imperfect manner in which they have submitted to them.

That which is true in respect to all our external relations you will find to be true in respect to our higher relations, or in respect to what is called, in distinction from our education in business, the education of our thoughts, our intellectual development, our philosophical elevation, our cultivation and refinement. In other words, when men are set to develop their mental faculties, they learn in just the same way that they do when they undertake to educate their muscles or their organs.

No man can learn to read except in one way. He cannot walk into a spelling-book and say, "I want *r* to have the force of *t*, and it shall." He must call *r*, *r*, and must give it the sound which custom gives it. *M* must be *m* to him, and *b* must be *b* to him. He must give to every letter in the alphabet the name and sound which belong to it. When a man begins to read he cannot say, "I will spell phthisic, t-i-s-i-c." Custom is law, and he is obliged to spell the word the other way—though I should not dare venture to tell you how! No man learns so simple a matter as reading or writing except by submitting himself to foregoing rules and regulations. Well, when a man begins to learn to read, he is exactly like folks who are just converted. "N-o, no; m-a-n, man; m-a-y, may; b-u-t, but; o-ff, off; t-h-e, the." Has the man who spells out his words thus learned to read? No. Why? Because he has to think of each letter in a word before he puts the letters together and pronounces the word. Do I do it? Do you do it? We do not. Why do we not? Because we have become so used to reading that our eye never sees a single letter in a word, nor

a single word in a sentence. Indeed, we are not conscious of sentences even : we are only conscious of the ideas which are expressed by the sentences. Our minds are so drilled that we take in only the event or thing described by these symbols on paper. We see the history itself, the person himself, the occurrence itself ; and the drama goes on before us as though we were looking through a glass at an actual picture.

Now, how do we come to that facility of reading ? By familiarizing ourselves with instruments or letters until they become our servants, as we first become theirs. We bow ourselves down to these crooked symbols ; and then we become so absolutely absorbed by them, in obedience to them, that they vanish and leave their power and effect in us as a part of our own personality.

The result is what we call "habit." Habit in the popular mind consists merely in doing things easily because we have become used to doing them ; but it is more : it is really the augmentation of faculty. It is a new power which a man has gained by the repetition of acts until he has perfected himself in a given direction. It exalts him. It brings him upon a higher plane of cerebral power or capacity.

It may be said that no man knows a thing perfectly until it has become so much a part of himself that his knowledge of it and his use of it cease to be matters of consciousness. We cease to be conscious of the force of letters in a sentence, and yet we read ; and just in proportion as we lose the consciousness of the letter-form we become perfect in the art of reading. No man knows how to walk well who thinks just how he is going to take every step. What is the trouble with awkward people when they go into company ? Nobody is so graceful in things that belong to the farm as the farmer. If you bring him to Boston and ask him to go into conditions that he is not accustomed to, he is awkward ; and the well-dressed, kid-gloved young man laughs to see how the poor old fellow acts ; but now, take our young man and put him behind the plow, and see how he will act ! He is as awkward there as the old man was in the city. But put the farmer behind the plow, and see the elasticity with which

he adapts himself to its movements. He observes what is coming, and prepares for it, and goes along with the utmost ease and composure. Where a man has had education and drill in the thing to which he is appointed, and does it unconsciously and automatically, according to its kind, it is noble and beautiful.

When buildings are being constructed I sometimes am tempted to go up and see what they are, how they are made; and I observe that the first story I get up the ladder well enough; that the second story I hold a little tighter to the rounds; that the third story I lie flat against the ladder; that the fourth and fifth stories I tremble, and crawl like a worm; and that when I get to the top I very carefully place my foot on the gutter, or step on the platform, and scarcely dare look around; but I see the workmen—men that are not a bit smarter than I am—run up the ladder, step all over the roof, go everywhere, without stopping to look where they tread, climb a rafter, put two sticks together, and spring to the top of them, light as a bird, nimble as a squirrel, and sure-footed as a spider; and as I look at them I envy them. But I go up to-morrow, and find that I have a little more confidence, and am not quite so dizzy-headed. I go up the next day, and the next, and the next. The result is that by and by I can go up just as well as they can, and just as quick, and can do it without thinking what I am doing.

I remember that in Indianapolis I had a house built. I wanted to economize in every way I could, and meant to paint it myself; and I did. I got along well enough until I came to the gable end, which was two and a half stories high. When I began to paint there I was so afraid that I should fall off from the platform that I nearly rubbed out with my vest what I put on with the brush; but in the course of a week I got so used to climbing that I was as nimble as any painter in town.

No man has learned a lesson who thinks of it at all as a lesson. No man has learned a trade who has to stop and say, "How ought I to guide my hand?"

A man begins to set type in a printing office. Here is a composing stick, and here is a case of letters. He is told to

set up, "All men are born free and equal," and he says to himself, "A. Where is A?" He looks for A, and finds it, feels of it and turns it over to get it in the right position. Then he says, "Double l," and he hunts for l; by and by he gets it, and puts it in the stick. At length he gets the first word set up; and finally the other words. But that man is not a printer, although he manages to set up "All men are free and equal." Go into the office of one of our dailies, and see a compositor set type there. He handles the letters so quick that your eye cannot follow them. His hand knows all about the case; it knows just where to find every letter; and no sooner does it touch the type than the type tells him which side up it is to go, without his thinking.

No person has learned anything so as to be perfect in it till he can do it without knowing it. When a man can do a thing without thinking of it, he has come to a state of liberty so far as that thing is concerned. He is in bondage to his notes who is obliged to think of his notes; he is in bondage to the piano who is obliged to think of the piano; but he is free who does not think of note or piano, and yet swells the strain and rolls off the symphony. He has subdued the music and the instrument; and now he may do what he pleases with them. He could only have done it, however, by going through what their low laws required him to do, which lifted him to the capacity of doing.

All government in the family, all methods of civil government, all institutions of education, and religion, ought to set this ideal before themselves. There is a great deal of government in the family that is mistaken. I have sometimes heard people say, "How poorly those boys have turned out! It is strange, too, because there never were boys more strictly brought up. To my certain knowledge, they used to be whipped once a week!" Yes, they were watched; they were kept out of evil; they were carefully instructed; and when they were of age, and went out of the family, they plunged into every liberty and every license, and proved themselves fallible and imperfect in every way. They learned a great many things in the family, but they never learned how to govern themselves. There are a great many fathers and

mothers whose nature is to *govern*. The spirit of autocracy and monarchy is in them. They do not govern their children to teach those children to govern themselves, but they govern them for the sake of governing them; and they keep it up; and the children never learn self-government. Now, the object of governing a child is to get rid of the necessity of governing him. It is to teach him the use of his own faculties with regard to the great laws which are fundamental to you and him in common. If you bring up your children with a liberty which has restriction enough to make them obey the law, and with an amount of government which makes them independent and self-reliant, you will do that which is best for them. They will make blunders; but they will learn. They will fall into mistakes; but those mistakes will be a part of their training. You can bring up a child so that he is all compliance toward externality; but he will have no power in himself; and what will he be good for? He will be like dough, and will never amount to anything. These round, smooth folks, that come up so carefully, and that will roll in all ways with equal facility, and are of no particular account, serving as mere punctuation points to keep other folks apart, have not been well developed, or taught, or bred.

Power of knowledge, obedience, training until it becomes unconscious and automatic, is the end that is sought by the whole drift of divine government, as indicated by nature and revealed by the Gospel. It is not meant that we should go through this life acting as if the world were a life-boat, to be used merely for snatching as many folks from destruction as possible, and for taking them safely to heaven. This world is God's university or school, where men begin at zero, and are to unfold and come to manhood as the object of God's decrees and providence and grace, and of the common sense which God has given to us.

The whole drift of civil governments, of churches, of schools, and of families, should be to make men larger, bolder, more symmetrical, freer, and to do it by the way of discipline, drill, the knowledge of laws, and obedience to them.

I have conducted this subject thus far without considering

it specially in its application to morality and religion ; but, after all, the end and drift of my discourse this morning is, *What does religion mean in a man?* The derivative meaning of the word *religion* is, To be bound ; to be tied up as by allegiance ; and the fulfillment of it, in a large part of the globe, has, unfortunately, been literal, and men have been *tied up*. The idea has been, very largely, that when a man became a Christian, he agreed with himself to give up dancing, and give up swearing, and give up gambling, and give up lying, and give up Sabbath-breaking, and give up dissipation, and give up bad company ; and his creed, if he were to let it out, would be, “I will not do this, I will not do that, I will not do that, I will not do that,” till by and by it will be as *knotty* as a pine plank sawn out of a small tree. Negatives are not to be derided nor despised ; but a man who has nothing but negatives is a fool, and has no temperament, no vitality, no positiveness. The true religious man is a man who is positive and affirmative. A man who has nothing more than *nots* is nothing. To be anything he must have actual virtues.

A farmer goes to the agricultural fairs, next week or the week after ; and he says, “I have a farm that I want to put in competition. It has not a weed on it—not one ; it has not a Canada thistle ; it has no purslain ; it has not a dock ; it has no plantain ; it has not any mullein. There is not a weed on it, absolutely.” “Well,” it is asked him, “what are your crops?” “Oh, I—I—” “Have you any wheat?” “No.” “Any corn?” “No.” “Any grafts in the orchard?” “No ; I have nothing of that kind—but I’ve got no weeds.” And that is all!

There are a great many people who seem to think that religion means *not doing wrong*. As if a knitting machine would be considered good that never knit any stockings, because it never misknit ! What is a man good for who simply does not do some things ?

There are thousands of men that are bad who come nearer to the royal idea of manhood than many professed Christians, because they are positive, and do something—because they are not bladders filled with air—and because they are not

dandelion blossoms, beautiful globes, worth nothing. A true man is a force-bearer and a force-producer. I understand that when a man becomes a Christian he has higher ideals, larger conceptions of life here and of the life to come. The motives which are addressed to him from the bosom of God are an inspiration by which he becomes more, does more, longs for more, strives for more, gains more. Before, he lived a circumscribed life; but now he moves out the walls on every side because he needs more room. "Lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes," is the right text for a true man. He that is a Christian ought to be a hundred times larger in every way than he was before he became a Christian. Larger in every way? Yes, larger in every way. What! larger in his passions? Yes, larger in his passions. His passions ought to be not only larger, but better and healthier. Pride ought to be stronger, only it ought to be in subjection to the law of love. It ought to be, under the influence of love, auxiliary to higher things, and not an autocrat in its own right. Every part of a man's nature is to be built up, and is to be made subordinate to love. Anything that God thought it worth while to put in a man, from his toe to his eyebrow, from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, is worthy of our consideration. He has not employed anything in the making of you that will not be needed for fuel.

Take a great good-natured, jolly fellow, who sits on verandahs, and tells pleasant stories, and plays all sorts of games well, and is good at a pic-nic or a card party, and drinks a little too much wine. People say of him, "What a pity it is that he is not a Christian! He is in a dangerous way; and yet he is a capital man in many respects." He becomes a Christian, after having gone through certain proper exercises. He does not sit on verandahs any more. His thoughts no longer dwell on frivolous things. He does not laugh. He is not seen at card parties and pic-nics any more. He supposes these are wrong. What does he do? He goes to church, and to prayer-meetings, and is a devout worshiper; but he grows stupider and stupider all the time. Before he became a Christian he was a genial, good companion, but

now he has cut that all off, and he does not take anything else on ; so that he really is weakened. To be sure, he may have withdrawn from certain faults ; but he has lost nearly as much in another direction as he has gained in this. I should say to such a man, It was not sociality, or gayety, or facility in amusement, that was your sin, but making such things the end and aim of your life. What you want to do is to make a complete manhood in Christ Jesus the end of your life, and take those lower things as instruments. Let every part of your nature, enlarged and made better, enter into that complete manhood. Taking Love as their supreme governor, let all the elements of your being, sweetened and made more powerful, aid in accomplishing this great work in the soul. A man ought to be better when he knows that he is living for that godliness which "is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." And yet, many persons come into the church from the world where they had strength and momentum in imperfect ways, and they lose that momentum and that strength because they do not understand that religion is not simply tying a man up, but tying him up to let him into a larger liberty. It drills him into obedience to law that he may be master of himself. No man is so free as that man who has accepted the law of God, which is expressed in the words, "Thou shalt love God supremely, and thy neighbor as thyself." There is no sound in the universe that cannot be chorded to that. Love is the only true concert-pitch. Let pride be the concert-pitch, and you cannot bring the orchestra of human nature into agreement with it. Let taste be the concert-pitch, and you cannot make all the other faculties of a man harmonize with it. There is many a part of our being with which all the other parts cannot be made concordant. But sound the word *love*—love to God and man—and there is no passion or appetite, there is no taste, there is no social feeling, there is no intellectual element, there is no moral sentiment, that cannot be brought into perfect accord with it—yea, and be made nobler and better by it.

He who understands that religion is the drilling of every part of his nature into accord with this great law of love by

which God himself is bound, by which he governs, through which the world is ripening, and which is to fill the eternal heavens with blessedness—he that understands this, and accepts that law in earnest, and obeys it, day and night, in the field, in the shop, on the sea, everywhere, and making pride and vanity and selfishness subservient to love, trains himself in obedience to it till it is easier for him to be gracious and beneficent than anything else—he has become a man that has looked into the perfect law of liberty, and that is continuing therein. He has become a citizen of the commonwealth of the universe, and is absolutely free.

My Christian brethren, this is just what you need. I observe that many persons never settle anything. They never carry a battle to its final results. You are now fighting with pride, as you were twenty years ago, and you are fighting with your temper as you were twenty years ago; or, if there is any difference, it is because the fire of youth and early manhood has burned out in you. Grace has done nothing for you, and you have done little for yourselves. Many persons are just as avaricious, just as stingy, just as close-handed as they were when they began their Christian lives. They recognize it, and are sorry for it, and once in a while they shed impotent tears over it, and once in a while they offer a little resistance to it; but they do not say to the intractable faculty, “You shall come to this law of love, and you shall be trained and drilled till you obey it without flinching.”

Here is a man who stands behind his counter. He is bilious and dyspeptic, and at home he is cross to his wife, and snappish to his children, and brutal to his inferiors; but when he goes into his store, where it is his interest to be complaisant, he is very agreeable. If a person comes in to buy something, he puts on, for the occasion, a commercial smile; but that is not benevolence—yes, it is benevolence just the same as moonshine is sunshine, cold, remote, reflected. Yet we are doing, in this, that and the other place, the same thing. We laugh at exaggerated instances of it, but we are not free from it ourselves.

We do not trust God. We are anxious with care. We fret and worry about to-day and to-morrow. We do not love

our neighbor as ourselves. We are envious and jealous. We do not honor and prefer each other as we are commanded to. The welfare of man is not precious to us. Nothing pleases us so quick as a bad story told about somebody. There are persons who are ready to catch at criticisms, or anything suspicious about folks, and are never specially gratified at hearing anything good about them. Such persons have not fulfilled the law of love in these things. On the other hand there are persons who are always actuated by love, and are always glad to learn anything good, and sorry to learn anything evil, concerning their fellow-men. Love is their habitual disposition, morning, noon and night. They are always radiant and beaming, because their manifestation of love is automatic and unconscious. Where by education, by training and drill, the whole man is subdued by this power of divine and human love, one is a Christian.

You professed the Creed when you joined the church; but oh, that you would profess something higher than that which the Creed means! When you professed religion and joined the church you should have joined as a boy goes to school. Some seem to think that when a man joins the church he is like a celebrated portrait in a picture gallery, at which people point and say, "Governor So and So," or "Governor So and So." It is often thought that those inside the church are saints, and that those outside are sinners. It is no such thing. There are sinners inside as well as outside. Those that are inside are sinners under medication, and the others are sinners without medication. Those that are inside are sinners in a hospital, and the others are sinners in their own houses. As the term *sinner* is generally used in the community, it is a very misleading and misinterpreting notion that men have. A man is a sinner whether he is in the church or out of it. A Christian is a man who is attempting to subdue every part of his nature to the law of God. That law is Love to God and to men; and he who binds himself in slavery to it till he is perfectly subdued by it, till in its full strength it resides in him, and reigns there, and he rejoices, heaven rejoicing with him, in that victory by which he comes to a perfect liberty, is a Christian.

Oh, how narrow our views are of the power of God on the soul of man ! Do you tell me that religion is failing because you see how bad a war is waged in the street where the desperate odds of business drive men hither and thither ? Do you tell me that religion is failing because men in public and political life gain their positions through cunning and craft, and that only here and there one endures ? Go with me to those places where the shadows that work grief and sorrow beat down on the household ; go with me to the all-patient mother's side ; go with me to her who is stripped of everything in life but her hope in God, and who is servant of all the neighborhood ; go with me among the humble, and among the meek who shall inherit the earth, and you will find that there is a school where God, by the Holy Ghost, compels such obedience to the great law of love that persons rise up in simplicity and meekness, princes, kings, priests unto God, having the liberty of the realm, and do what they have a mind to because their whole soul has a mind to do the things which the law requires, and which God loves.

Such is the liberty that makes men free. He that is out of concord with those motions and throbs of the divine Heart that sends currents of light through the universe is narrowing and dwarfing himself. He only is a full man who is a man in Christ Jesus.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

DRAW near to us by thy Spirit, Almighty God and Heavenly Father, and make thyself known to our thoughts, not by display, as once thou didst upon the burning mountain, not by force, but by the inspiration of gentle thoughts and sweet affections, by relieving us from darkness, and sorrow, and fear, and remorse, and by breathing upon us peace, and gladness, and good will and hope. Draw us far away from animal life—from those that are around about us; from the bird, and from the insect, and from the beast; from all things that have but begun their lives; for we are thine, we are God's sons, and our true life is nearer to thee and to the invisible than to things seen and visible. Therefore may we know thy presence in the elevation of our souls; in the springing forth of joys to meet thee; and as the homeliest and lowliest things bear upon themselves tributes of joy in the morning wherein the sun beholds itself, and they are beautiful in his light, so may all our thoughts, joining in the light of thy rising glory, seem beautiful to thee; and may we reflect that thou art blessing us with thyself as nothing else in all the realm of the universe can bless us. May we realize that we are blest in thy love, in a conscious strength derived from thee, and in holy hopes born not of ourselves, though in us, but of thee.

Grant, we pray thee, that we may feel how much more we are than we seem to be, and how much less we are than we think ourselves to be. Grant that the things of which we boast, but which are poor, and perishing, may be revealed to us in their poverty, and the things which we neglect, wherein our true strength and our true greatness lie, may be revealed to us in their majesty and beauty; and that we may go out of our ordinary life, its servility, its bondage and its painfulness, into our higher life, where we shall be hid with Christ in God, in whom every one hath a covert and a refuge. We pray that this day God may become a name not of fear nor of authority alone, but of love and of joy. Wilt thou help every one to-day to roll away the stone, if he sit in darkness, and behold the risen Saviour. May Christ come forth this morning to every soul as the messenger and the symbol of hope in immortality. We pray that thou wilt help every soul to appropriate something from thee, O blessed Saviour, that it needs. Help every one who is conscious of deficiency, of ignorance, of short-comings, of perpetual transgressions, of wrongs done or permitted. Help each soul to lean upon thee, and to borrow of thee medicine, and food, and raiment, a staff for its weary feet, light for its eyes, hearing for its ears, and life for itself.

Be with all of us. Become to us the first and the last, the beginning and the end, the Alpha and Omega. Grant that we may have in thee that inheritance which we lack in ourselves.

We pray that thou wilt renew the joy that they have had whose joys have faded; that thou wilt redeem from sorrow those who are bent and ready to break; that thou wilt give strength to those that are weak; that thou wilt establish the feet of those that slide; that thou wilt deliver from their fears those that stand looking forth

upon impending dangers; that thou wilt hush the anxieties of those that fret away the very fabric of life; that thou wilt still the tumult of passion in them that are bestead by passion; that thou wilt give control to those who are driven about by every wind of doctrine, and success to those who strive earnestly for that which is good, and are perpetually rolled back from it.

Grant to every one, this morning, according to his necessity. May those that hunger and thirst after righteousness be filled, and behold the Saviour who hath in him that which they need—who hath something that stands over against every want of the soul—who supplieth indeed the bread of life.

We pray that thou wilt grant to those who have known thee, and rejoice in thee, and dwell in peace from day to day, more manifestations of thyself, that they may every day come down from communion with God, as thy servant of old came down from the mountain, with a face shining with things spiritual, that men may behold and rejoice in the reflected light thereof; and that they may become ministers of peace, of salvation, and of hope to all that are around about them.

Grant, we pray thee, that we may have great joy of one another, to-day, as we dwell together for the hour. May we lay aside all the ugliness, and weakness, and pride, and envy, and jealousy, that so beset us in the world, and that separate us and make us so hurtful one to another. Grant that we may dwell in that peace which brings us nearer together. Grant that all the wrinkles which care has made may be smoothed out, that all trouble may be taken away, and that we may rejoice in each other as heirs of a common salvation, as children of a common parentage, and as pilgrims bound for a common blessedness in the land of immortality.

We pray that thy blessing may rest upon all that we love. Go to those that we have left behind; and visit those that have gone away from us and are upon the sea, or upon the land, in the city or in the wilderness, wherever they may be throughout the wide world.

O Lord, grant that thy blessing may be distilled as dew upon every heart in this presence. We pray that this may be an hour in which secret petitions shall go up and receive the pledges of answer and fulfillment from thee.

We pray that thou wilt bless this dwelling, and all that here control and manage. May the cause of God, the purity of the Holy Spirit, and the power of divine love, abide under this roof forever more. May all that have come up hither receive a blessing of God. May this be to them a day indeed of rest from evil, and of aspiration toward good.

Bless our whole land. Bring us more and more together in a true unity of reciprocal interests. May we be knit together in confidence, and in a desire for things that shall ennoble this whole nation.

We pray that intelligence may prevail everywhere. We pray that strength may be imparted to the weak. We pray that this great and prosperous nation, builded up by a thousand precious influences, may grow strong for justice, for goodness, for the rights of mankind, for peace and for prosperity throughout the whole

world. And may the day speedily come when men shall love one another, and aid one another, and study the things which make for peace, and learn war no more; when there shall be no oppression known, nor any desire to oppress; when men shall be so strong that none can bind them; when the kingdom of God shall descend; and when the new heavens and the new earth in which dwelleth righteousness shall appear.

And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit, evermore. *Amen.*



PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

GRANT, we pray thee, dear Lord and Master, an incoming of light and knowledge that we may see more perfectly the truth; that we may know more perfectly that the way of Christ is the way of liberty; that we may understand that suffering means learning, and that tears betoken smiles, as from thorns come roses. Grant that we may comprehend how by submission we rule; how by obedience we come to a state in which we no longer need commands; how by conforming to law in our innermost man we rise higher than the law. Grant to every one in thy presence some portion of this truth, that he may order his life in accordance with it. May self-will die out, and may conformity to the will of God take the place of it, in the heart of every one here. May we try to be better in our families. May we seek to treat each other, in all the affairs of life, with more justice and more kindness. May we endeavor to apply the Gospel to our conduct. May it drive away doubt, and envy, and jealousy, and all the imps that Satan sends upon us. We pray that we may become children of the light, and that we may be children of the day, and walk in the full communion of freedom here, in the hope of a yet greater emancipation, and more perfect development in the world that is to come. O Lord, chide us for our narrowness. We are not hungry enough. We do not aspire enough. Our longings are too few and too easily satisfied. Give us more discontent. Grant that we may have more aspiration. Create in us a true hungering of the soul for that which is infinite and enduring. We ask it not for ourselves nor in our own wisdom, but in the adorable name of our Beloved, to whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, shall be praises everlasting. *Amen.*

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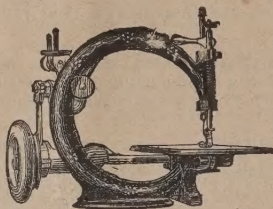
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